

1. (currently amended) A method of transferring application-generated structured data from a client to a server, such that information structures specified by the application-generated structured data can be automatically expanded into corresponding information structures displayable by a website in communication with the server, the method including the steps of:  
providing an interface at the client for accepting application-generated structured data,  
converting into a source-independent format the accepted application-generated structured data, thereby to generate a source-independent data package, wherein  
the converting step includes  
interpreting the application-generated structured data and creating a definition of a meta-design object model of the application-generated structured data; and  
packaging all relevant data, including the meta-design object-model and graphics files or other information items, into the source-independent data package,  
transmitting to the server the source-independent data package,  
receiving at the server the source-independent data package, and  
creating or modifying on the server, in accordance with the received source-independent data package, information structures corresponding to the information structures specified by the application-generated structured data, wherein the information structures created or modified on the server include back references to the information structures specified by the application-generated structured data so that if the original, application-generated structured data is modified, the information structures at the server, corresponding to the information structures specified by the application-generated structured data, are also appropriately modified.
2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the application-generated structured data contains embedded information providing description about organization, hierarchical decomposition or source of the data.
3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the application-generated structured data is CAD data.
4. (currently amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the application-generated structured data contains embedded information providing description about organization of a three-dimensional design into assemblies, sub-assemblies and parts.

5. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein the CAD data is created by a CAD software tool.
6. (original) The method of claim 5 wherein the CAD software tool is Solidworks or ProEngineer.
7. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the application-generated structured data is representative of a project schedule.
8. (currently amended) The method of claim 7 wherein the application-generated structured data is produced by Microsoft Project
9. (currently amended) The method of claim 8 wherein the application-generated structured data includes information about tasks and sub-tasks of the schedule.
10. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the application-generated structured data is produced by Microsoft PowerPoint.
11. (currently amended) The method of claim 2 wherein the application-generated structured data is produced by Microsoft Excel.
12. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the client runs a process to determine which of a plurality of document handlers is to be used to process the application-generated structured data.
13. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the ~~converting step includes the step of interpreting the structured data and creating~~ meta-design object model is an ApXML file representative of the application-generated structured data.
14. (currently amended) The method of claim 13 wherein the interpreting step is executed by the client, which runs a document handler that interprets the application-generated structured data in the designated file directly or by opening the creating application and interrogating the creating application through an API to obtain the application-generated structured data.
15. (currently amended) The method of claim 14 wherein, ~~following interpretation of the structured data, the client packages all relevant data, including~~ the meta-design object model is an ApXML file and graphics files or other information items, and then causes the package to be transferred to the server.

16. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein the server, following receipt of the package, interprets the ApXML and in response to the interpretation of the ApXML and supporting files, creates or modifies information structures on the website in accordance with information contained in the ApXML and supporting files.
17. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein the client contains an Inbox Control comprising an ActiveX control that functions as a "drop" target in a GUI image presented by the website.
18. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the client contains an Inbox Control comprising an ActiveX control that functions as a "drop" target in a Graphical User Interface image presented by the website, and the Inbox Control functions to accept the "dropped" data.
19. (original) The method of claim 18 wherein the client contains a Data Selector that controls bidding and selection of an appropriate data handler.
20. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein the Data Selector employs restrictions in the bidding process to restrict selected types of data.
21. (original) The method of claim 20 wherein the client contains at least one Data Client that functions as a data handler.
22. (original) The method of claim 18 wherein the client contains a plurality of Data Clients that (1) collectively constitute an extendible set of data handlers, (2) bid for the handling of data types they recognize, (3) can be selected by the Data Selector, and (4) once selected by the Data Selector, process the data.
23. (original) The method of claim 22 wherein new Data Clients can be added and registered with the system and bidding process, whereby the set of Data Clients is extended.
24. (original) The method of claim 23 wherein the client contains a Bundler Control that bundles into discrete files any data designated for transfer to the server.
25. (original) The method of claim 24 wherein the server contains an Active Manager that unbundles data received from the client.
26. (original) The method of claim 25 wherein the server contains a Data Processor that controls the manner in which "dropped" data are applied to the website in accordance with information

contained in the data.

27. (original) The method of claim 26 wherein the server contains a plurality of Data Processors and the Active Manager selects an appropriate Data Processor from among the plurality of Data Processors to process the received data.

28. (original) The method of claim 27 wherein the server contains an ApXML processor that processes the received XML data and creates website structure according to instructions from the selected Data Processor.

29. (original) The method of claim 28 wherein the server contains a Bundler Control that is employed to un-bundle the bundled files received from the client.

30. (currently amended) The method of claim 29 further comprising the following steps:  
navigating, using a web browser on the client, to a web page providing an interface to the Inbox Control,

dragging and dropping, on a GUI supported by the web browser, at least one document containing application-generated structured data onto the display area associated with the Inbox Control,

passing the application-generated structured data to the Data Selector,  
determining, using the Data Selector, the identities of registered Data Clients,  
passing the application-generated structured data to the registered Data Clients,  
receiving bids from the Data Clients, responsive to each Data Client's examination of the structured data,

evaluating, based upon predetermined criteria, the bids received from the Data Clients,  
selecting, responsive to the evaluating step, a Data Client to process the application-generated structured data,

processing, using the selected Data Client, the application-generated structured data,  
and

creating or modifying, on the server, information structures specified by the application-generated structured data, thereby to create or modify structure on the website.

31. (original) The method of claim 30 wherein the processing step includes the step of interrogating the file and extracting therefrom information descriptive of structure, graphic view and any associated predefined information items extracted from the original source data file, project element thumbnail images, preview images or hotspots.

32. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein the interrogating step includes either interpreting

the file data directly or calling the file's creating application and using an API associated with the application.

33. (original) The method of claim 32 wherein the processing step includes the further step of activating a user interface to obtain information from the user.

34. (original) The method of claim 33 wherein the information can include options affecting structure handling or geographical representations.

35. (currently amended) The method of claim 34 wherein the processing step further includes using information about the document structure to create an ApXML file describing hierarchy and related application-generated structured data, wherein the ApXML file is the meta-design object model of the application-generated structure data.

36. (original) The method of claim 35 wherein the processing step further includes placing in a designated directory structure all corresponding files.

37. (original) The method of claim 36 comprising the further step of returning, using the Data Client, a list of files and associated information back to the Data Selector.

38. (original) The method of claim 37 wherein associated information includes Process Type, Document Type and Document Subtype.

39. (original) The method of claim 38 comprising the further step of passing, using the Data Selector, all associated information back to the Inbox Control.

40. (currently amended) The method of claim 39 comprising the further step of utilizing the ApXML Processor to create or modify information structures specified by the application-generated structured data, in response to the APXML and other files received from the client.

41. (original) The method of claim 40 comprising the further step of transmitting to a website in communication with the server, events that cause the website to be updated and regenerated in correspondence with the application-generated structured data generated at the client.

42. (currently amended) The method of claim 41 wherein data processing restrictions can be assigned to the application-generated structured data at the Inbox Control.

43. (original) The method of claim 42 wherein bids are based upon predetermined criteria.

44. (original) The method of claim 43 wherein the criteria can include file extension, file content or restrictions.
45. (currently amended) The method of claim 44 wherein bids are generated in accordance with a Data Client's evaluation of its ability to handle a given ~~structured data file~~ of application-generated structured data.
46. (currently amended) The method of claim 45 wherein the greater the Data Client's ability to handle the file of application-generated structured data, the higher the Data Client's bid.
47. (currently amended) The method of claim 46 wherein the ~~structured data file~~ of application-generated structured data is passed to the highest bidder.
48. (original) The method of claim 47 wherein the Inbox Control is instantiated and initialized using HTML and Java Script in the web page containing the interface to the Inbox Control.
49. (currently amended) The method of claim 48 wherein ApXML functions as a mechanism to import any application-generated structured data in a manner independent of the source of that application-generated structured data.
50. (original) The method of claim 49 wherein ApXML is a specific definition of XML tags used to represent an ActiveProject internal meta-design structure.
51. (original) The method of claim 50 wherein the ActiveProject meta-design describes aspects of a design, including categories of information, the hierarchical decomposition of each aspect into project elements and sub-project elements, and any properties and associated information items associated with each project element.
52. (original) The method of claim 51 wherein the properties and information items associated with each project element can include files, URLs, and database queries.
53. (original) The method of claim 52 wherein the meta-design also describes a graphic appearance for each project element.
54. (original) The method of claim 53 wherein the graphic appearance can include a thumbnail image or a hotspot over a background picture.

55. (original) The method of claim 54 wherein each element in the meta-design has a corresponding tag in ApXML.
56. (original) The method of claim 55 wherein a tag in ApXML is used to designate any information items or files associated with an aspect of a project.
57. (original) The method of claim 56 wherein information items can include name, description, document type and file path.
58. (original) The method of claim 57 wherein ApXML supports definitions of top level aspects of a project or design.
59. (original) The method of claim 58 wherein top level aspects of the project or design are represented as tabs in the associated web sites.
60. (original) The method of claim 59 wherein ApXML supports definition of project elements and sub-elements using XML tags.
61. (original) The method of claim 60 wherein ApXML supports definition of project element properties, including associated thumbnail images, and association of predefined information item files with the defined project element.
62. (original) The method of claim 61 wherein ApXML supports definition of a reference identifier so that when the original data files are republished, the same object can be recognized.
63. (currently amended) A method for replicating, on a website in communication with a server, representations of application-specific structured data originating on a client, the method comprising the steps of:
- obtaining application-specific structured data at the client, where the application-specific structured data can be generated by any of a number of application programs;
  - converting the application-specific structured data into an application-independent format to create an application-independent data bundle, wherein the application-independent format includes back references to the application-specific format
- the converting step includes
- interpreting the application-specific structured data and creating a definition of a meta-design object model of the application-specific structured data; and

packaging all relevant data, including the meta-design object-model and graphics files or other information items, into an application-independent data bundle,

sending the application-independent data bundle over the communications network to the server;

expanding the application-independent data bundle into structured data at the server, the structured data at the server specifying representations corresponding to the application-specific ~~structure~~ structured data that originated on the client, wherein the application-independent format includes back references to the application-specific structured data so that if the original, application-specific structured data is modified, the data that is associated with the corresponding structured data at the server is also appropriately modified; and

generating events to modify the web site in communication with the server to create the specified representations.

64. (original) The method of claim 63 wherein the application-independent format utilizing an extensible markup language.

65. (cancel)

66. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 comprising the further step of maintaining back references from the structured data at the server to the corresponding application-specific structured data at the client.

67. (currently amended) A method for replicating, on a website in communication with a server, representations of application-specific structured data originating on a client, the method comprising the steps of:

activating an Internet connection between the client and the server;  
activating a browser program at the client, the browser program including a GUI;  
sending to the client via the Internet a hypertext document containing information representative of a drop zone displayable on the GUI, for receiving, via a GUI drag-and-drop operation, a file;  
receiving, via the drop zone, an application-specific file containing a data object ~~characteristics~~ characteristic of an application program used to create the application-specific file;

converting the application-specific file into application-independent data, wherein the converting step includes

interpreting the application-specific file and creating a definition of a meta-design object model of the application-specific file; and



packaging all relevant data, including the meta-design object-model and graphics files or other information items, into a bundle of application-independent data;

sending the bundle of application-independent data over a connection to the server;  
expanding the application-independent data into structured data at the server, the structured data at the server specifying an information structure corresponding to information structures specified by the application-specific file; and

generating an event, based on the structured data at the server, to modify the web site in communication with the server to create the specified information structure, wherein the structured data at the server includes back references to the application-specific file so that if the original, application-specific file is modified, the data that is associated with the corresponding information structures at the server is also appropriately modified.

68. (currently amended) The method of claim 67 wherein a plurality of application-specific files are received via the drop zone.

69. (original) The method of claim 67 wherein the application-specific files at the client can be generated by any of a plurality application programs.

70. (currently amended) The method of claim 69 further including the step of maintaining the back references from the structured data at the server to the corresponding application-specific file at the client.

71. (original) The method of claim 67 wherein the website has a set of associated users, who are notified when the website is modified.

72. (original) The method of claim 71 wherein the users are notified by e-mail.

73. (currently amended) A method for replicating, on a website in communication with a server, representations of application-specific structured data originating on a client, the method comprising the steps of:

obtaining application-specific structured data at the client;  
passing the application-specific structured data to two or more bidding data processor elements;  
causing each of the bidding processors to interpret the application-specific structured data;

causing each of the bidding processors to generate a bid representative of the ability of the submitting processor to convert the application-specific structured data into application-independent data;  
selecting, on the basis of the generated bids, one of the bidding processors to convert the application-specific structured data;  
causing the selected bidding component to convert the application-specific structured data into application-independent data, wherein  
converting the application-specific structured data includes  
interpreting the application-specific structured data and creating a definition of a meta-design object model of the application-specific structured data; and  
packaging all relevant data, including the meta-design object-model and graphics files or other information items, into a bundle of application-independent data;  
sending the application-independent data bundle over a connection to the server;  
expanding the application-independent data into structured data at the server, the structured data at the server specifying representations corresponding to the application-specific structured data originating on the client; and  
generating an event, based on the structured data at the server, to modify the web site in communication with the server to create the specified information structure, wherein the application-independent data includes back references to the format of the application-specific structured data so that if the original, application-specific structured data is modified, the data that is associated with the corresponding information structures at the server is also appropriately modified.

74. (original) The method of claim 73 including the further step of determining which bidding processors are registered on the client.

75. (currently amended) The method of claim 74 including the further steps of determining whether restrictions are associated with the application-specific structured data; and passing, to the bidding components, the restrictions with the application-specific structured data.

76. (original) The method of claim 75, wherein the bid value is based on any of file extension, file content, or restrictions.

77. (original) The method of claim 76, wherein the application-independent data is structured in accordance with an extensible markup language.

78. (original) The method of claim 77 wherein the markup language comprises XML.

79. (currently amended) The method of claim 78 including the further steps of:  
extracting structure information from the application-specific structured data; and  
sending to the server the structure information along with the application-independent data.
80. (original) The method of claim 78 further including:  
obtaining structure information from a human user at the client;  
sending to the server the structure information along with the application-independent data.
81. (currently amended) The method of claim 80 comprising the further steps of:  
requesting, by generating a request signal at the client, a new data processor element if none of the existing data processor elements is capable of converting the application-specific structured data into application-independent data; and  
registering the new processor element at the client.
82. (currently amended) The method of claim 81 comprising the further step of utilizing the new processor element to convert the application-specific structured data into application-independent data.
83. (currently amended) A method of transferring application-generated structured data from a client to a server, such that information structures specified by the application-generated structured data can be automatically expanded into corresponding information structures displayable by a website in communication with the server, the client having a set of Data Clients, the method including the steps of:  
providing an interface at the client for accepting application-generated structured data,  
selecting a Data Client to process the application-generated structured data;  
converting the accepted application-generated structured data, by the selected Data Client, into a source-independent format, thereby to generate a source-independent data package, ~~wherein the source-independent data package includes back references to the format of the application-generated structured data, wherein~~  
the converting step includes  
interpreting the application-generated structured data and creating a definition of a meta-design object model of the application-generated structured data; and

packaging all relevant data, including the meta-design object-model and graphics files or other information items, into a source-independent data package,

transmitting to the server the source-independent data package,  
receiving at the server the source-independent data package, and  
creating or modifying on the server, in accordance with the received source-independent data package, information structures corresponding to the information structures specified by the application-generated structured data, wherein the source-independent data package includes back references to the format of the application-generated structured data so that if the original, application-generated structure data is modified, the data that is associated with the corresponding information structures at the server is also appropriately modified.

84. (original) The method of claim 83 wherein new Data Clients can be added and registered with the system, whereby the set of Data Clients is extended.

85. (original) The method of claim 84 wherein the client interface accepts a plurality of application-generated structured data sets.

86. (original) The method of claim 85 wherein the plurality of application-generated structured data sets may be generated by a plurality of applications.

87. (original) The method of claim 85 wherein a plurality of Data Clients are selected to convert application-specific structured data, each Data Client being assigned one or more application-specific structured data sets.

88. (original) The method of claim 83 comprising the further step of generating a thumbnail image representative of at least a portion of the information structure.

89. (original) The method of claim 88 comprising the further step of generating a thumbnail image representative of a data object.

90. (currently amended) A system for transferring application-generated structured data from a client to a server, such that information structures specified by the application-generated structured data can be automatically expanded into corresponding information structures displayable by a website in communication with the server, the system including:  
an interface at the client for accepting application-generated structured data,  
a converter element that converts into a source-independent format the accepted application-generated structured data, thereby to generate a source-independent data package,

~~wherein the source-independent data package includes back references to the format of the application-generated structured data, wherein~~

the converting step includes

interpreting the application-generated structured data and creating a definition of a meta-design object model of the application-generated structured data; and

packaging all relevant data, including the meta-design object-model and graphics files or other information items, into the source-independent data package,

a communications channel that transmits to the server the source-independent data package,

elements at the server that receive the source-independent data package, and

elements that create or modify on the server, in accordance with the received source-independent data package, information structures corresponding to the information structures specified by the application-generated structured data, wherein the source-independent data package includes back references to the format of the application-generated structured data so that if the original, application-generated structure data is modified, the data that is associated with the corresponding information structures at the server is also appropriately modified.

91. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of creating or modifying the information structures includes:

processing the received source information package and information structures already created or modified on the server and, based thereon, modifying the information structures already on the server.

92. (currently amended) The method of claim 63, wherein the step of generating events to modify the web site includes processing the received application-independent data bundle and, based thereon, modifying structured data already on the server to specify representations corresponding to modified application-specific structure structured data that originated on the client.

93. (previously presented) The method of claim 83, wherein creating or modifying the information structures includes:

processing the received source information package and information structures already created or modified on the server and, based thereon, modifying the information structures already on the server.

94. (previously presented) The method of claim 90, wherein the elements that create or modify the information structures includes:

elements that process the received source information package and information structures already created or modified on the server and, based thereon, modify the information structures already on the server.

95. (currently amended) A method of transferring application-generated structured data from a client to a server, such that information structures specified by the application-generated structured data can be automatically expanded into corresponding information structures displayable by a website in communication with the server, the method including the steps of:

providing an interface at the client for accepting application-generated structured data, converting into a source-independent format the accepted application-generated structured data, thereby to generate a source-independent data package, wherein

the converting step includes

interpreting the application-generated structured data and creating a definition of a meta-design object model of the application-generated structured data; and

packaging all relevant data, including the meta-design object-model and graphics files or other information items, into the source-independent data package,

transmitting to the server the source-independent data package,  
receiving at the server the source-independent data package, and  
creating or modifying on the server, in accordance with the received source-independent data package, information structures corresponding to the information structures specified by the application-generated structured data, wherein the information structures at the server include back references to the format of the application-generated structured data so that if the original, application-generated structure data is modified, the data that is associated with the corresponding information structures at the server is also appropriately modified

wherein the client contains a control that functions as a "drop" target in a Graphical User Interface image presented by the website, and the control functions to accept the "dropped" data.